

THE EUGENICS REVIEW

THE EUGENIC PRINCIPLE IN SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

By SYBIL GOTTO, O.B.E.

ALTHOUGH we are not yet in sight of the cessation of hostilities, we must from time to time turn from the scenes of carnage and destruction, to rest our minds and draw inspiration from the vision of possible reconstruction on better lines after the war.

From the untold evils of war some good emerges. Our system of social values has been tested on the touchstone of a great emergency and in many respects has been found wanting. As a result our minds are more open since we realise that changes are inevitable, and thus ideals of social progress have more chance of development than could be the case in the apathetic atmosphere of peace.

Just as a change of climate or soil will encourage variation in plants, so a change in mental atmosphere may encourage change and development in our ideas of social values. Social values are based on certain fundamental principles, and as it is on accepted social values that practical action is based, it becomes of extreme importance that the fundamental principles on which social reconstruction is to be founded should be carefully considered.

For example, we accept as a fundamental principle of civilised society that a citizen has a right to possess personal property; we therefore place a high value on commercial honesty. Laws are promulgated to ensure it. The power of the State is used to enforce it. Educational systems incorporate it as part of the ethical equipment of the young.

I want to consider how the recognition of the fundamental principles of Eugenics would find practical expression in the

various schemes for social reconstruction now under consideration.

The ultimate progress of society is undeniably dependent on the inherent biological quality of the individuals of the human race. It will avail little if a vast store of knowledge is accumulated and the type of human brain deteriorates, or even remains static, and is unable to give it intelligent expression by utilising it for the amelioration of human conditions. Nor would it be better if intellectual progress were associated with physical deterioration—if our minds became stronger and more active while our bodies became unable to resist disease or other unfavourable conditions.

In order to ascertain what practical forms can be given to our eugenic ideal we must first define the principles on which that ideal is based. It is rightly contended that our knowledge of the details of heredity is not yet sufficiently certain and accurate to enable judgment to be pronounced in the majority of individual cases. Although this may be true, it is equally true that the main principle that "like tends to beget like" is firmly established, as is also the fact that certain definite defects have been recognised as barriers to fit parenthood, and this recognition has been given expression in law in certain countries.

It can probably be maintained that in a democratic country the majority of physically and mentally fit citizens tend to rise in the social scale and to establish themselves in an independent economic position. There is a continual recruitment of the economically self-supporting classes from the social strata immediately below. There is also a continual recruitment of the lowest social strata from all the social classes above. Even those who have been born into the economically independent classes, if they have not sufficient capacity to maintain this position, tend to sink to the lower levels of the dependent economic group. It cannot be stated that biological fitness is a quality particular to any one social status, as inherent ability may first declare itself in any class, though if the right social values are accorded to inherent worth a social selection should be made of the best stock. Considerable confusion has arisen

in the minds of many eugenists and anti-eugenists on this point, and it has been maintained by many opponents to eugenics that eugenists state that all civic worth is peculiar to the upper social class. This is not so, but it is recognised that biological worth tends to rise in the social scale, therefore our aim in assessing social values should be to attach the higher value to socially advantageous biological qualities and so assist this selection of the better types for the positions of economic independence, in order that early marriage and parenthood may be encouraged.

It is recognised that at present marriage takes place earlier and the birth-rate is higher in the less efficient and less skilled groups, but as the position of labour improves and knowledge spreads, the high birth-rate will probably cease to be a characteristic of these classes. The need for encouraging early marriage and parenthood among the *efficient* cannot be too strongly advocated.

As an example of the racial effect of attaching social value to given attributes we may cite the Greek cult of physical beauty. This was expressed in various social customs—athletic games—high artistic conceptions as to the human form. Selection in marriage was evidently influenced by these ideals resulting in the persistence to this day of the Greek type of beauty as a recognised ideal.

Although circumstances were such that the small numbers involved in the Greek civilisation and the loss of the purity of the stock owing to subsequent mixture with biologically inferior types—slaves and other cosmopolitans—prevented the Greek conception having much biological effect on general racial development, it remains an example and a tradition that, if reproduced on broader and more general lines, might prove permanently beneficial to the human race.

If it is agreed that our customs and institutions are largely influenced by our assessment of social values; then it behoves us to assess these values rightly. In the period immediately before the War our estimates were often wrong; thus, to give one instance, almost the highest rewards which society could bestow were allotted to the faculty of acquisitiveness.

We see the practical expression of this in the diffusion of honours to the plutocratic group and the possibility of persons with this faculty highly developed amassing large fortunes and producing nothing that would add to the real wealth of the world, while many who were the real "captains of industry," organising large productive undertakings, were less highly valued socially than the stockbroker and financier.

The fresh ideas of value generated by the War may, it is hoped, transfer the premium set on the acquisitive faculty to the faculty of initiative and constructive ability, to the distinct advantage of eugenic selection.

So long as society tolerates a large number of its citizens subsisting upon profits which they derive not from the production of things of real value, but by virtue of their power to juggle with the exchanges as unproductive middlemen, so long will this constitute a waste of enterprise and vigour. If in addition to the economic advantage such individuals obtain under existing conditions, this country also sets a high social value on the faculties that make for this kind of success, so long shall we encourage the persistence and increase of the type. From the eugenic standpoint we would urge that social recognition and honour should be reserved for individuals of proved civic worth—that is, in addition to those who are selected by their colleagues as "worthy" in their own specialised profession (medicine, science, art, music, etc.), those who contribute to the general well-being and prosperity of their generation. A cleaner and a clearer conception of economics has been disclosed in the social upheaval, and it is becoming more and more obvious that money is and should be recognised simply as the artificial mechanism to render easy the exchange of goods and services.

The clearer and more general recognition of the fundamental basis of economics will help us materially to give practical expression to our eugenic principles. Once it is clearly recognised that wealth depends on the "capacity for production" it will give us a standard by which to judge economic efficiency.

If this principle were accepted by the Trades Unions they would remove the regulations which tend to reduce production, and this would have a twofold effect. In the first place, it would increase the number of material objects which could be produced by a given number of people in a given time, and would thus increase the wealth of the world. The cost of living would be reduced in relation to wages and the standard of comfort raised. In the second place, an opportunity would be provided for the more efficient worker to rise into prominence, and thus a form of eugenic selection would come into operation.

If we want to raise the inherent quality of the race we must discover as rapidly as possible the most efficient members of the community in each generation and give them all facilities possible to establish themselves in an independent economic position, in order that they may rapidly assume parental responsibility.

For instance, income tax should be graded inversely to the size of the family. A man having eight children would require more to house, clothe, feed and educate his children than would the man or woman who had not assumed the responsibilities of marriage.

From the eugenic point of view one would suggest that, while care is taken that the total income derived from the income tax paying class is not reduced, distribution of the burden of the tax within that class should be such as to divide the income by the number of people it is required to support. The original quota of taxation paid by this class should remain constant but its distribution should be determined by the real "ability to pay."

Perhaps an easier immediate manner of meeting the question would be by a scheme of exemption from liability to income tax, of money paid for the education and maintenance of children, in the same way as money now paid on insurance premiums is exempted from income tax. This would necessarily involve the payment of a considerably higher rate of tax in the pound by unmarried persons and those married persons having no children, but would also be a recognition of the principle which the State should emphasise—the responsibility of parenthood.

In the non-income-tax-paying classes this debt will have to be recognised in other ways by the facilities for adequate housing accommodation, by a well-adjusted scholarship system, by adequate maternity assistance and by a comprehensive policy of infant welfare.

One factor in the economic situation of immediate practical importance, but, it is hoped, of only passing importance, is the urgent need for safe-guarding the economic position of the injured fighting man returning to industrial life.

As all those who were unfit were rejected for the Army, and even those who were less fit who entered the Army did not reach the fighting line, it may be taken that those men discharged *through wounds* are on the average the inherently fitter members of the community and as such have an added value as potential parents of the future generation, and there need be no fear that disabilities caused by active service are inherited. This point needs considerable emphasis as it is important that reconstruction committees, especially local committees, should bear in mind that it is a racial service to establish such men in positions that will enable them to assume the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood.

It should also be one of the functions of the local committees interesting themselves in the well-being of the returned fighting men, to secure to them opportunities of meeting women of such a type as would make good wives and mothers. There is a considerable tendency at present among the less desirable types of women to entrap disabled men with pensions, for the sake of the financial inducement, and in the interests of the future this tendency should be checked.

The recognition of the family as the biological unit should coincide with its recognition as an economic unit, and that it shall be so regarded by social custom is the best means of securing that individual development may be given the maximum of opportunity, which should be the aim of democratic society.

War conditions have given considerable prominence to this, and it has already been recognised in some centres that

the *family* wage is the determining economic factor in that it governs the whole standard of living.

Let us now consider how the recognition of the family as a biological unit will affect our ideas of practical social reconstruction. There will be some divergence of opinion on the point. In fact many of the tendencies in social reform involve the direct negation of this view. Parental responsibility is being relieved in many directions. Considerable reforms are being advocated in the marriage laws: some of these ignore the family altogether and take the standpoint that children are the possession of the State and not of the parent. If it is conceded that inherent biological worth is the fundamental need of the race to enable it even to maintain an existing standard of civilisation, much less to progress, then the highest importance must be attached to selection for parenthood. Although this selection must be greatly influenced by social custom it resolves itself eventually into sexual selection. If the altruistic ideal is to find its expression in the service of the future, then selection in marriage, that is, selection for parenthood, becomes the most important action in the individual life, and the foundation of a family must be undertaken with a due sense of responsibility.

Taking it as an accepted principle that the family is to be recognised as the unit in the modern State, how will this affect our practical lines of reconstruction?

We shall find it necessary to strengthen existing, and devise fresh social customs which shall select and give preference to families of good stock, thus facilitating early marriage, and encouraging parenthood.

In all cases we must accentuate parental responsibility and render it impossible that either man or woman should create fresh lives without acknowledging parenthood.

If we are to attach special importance to selection we must so train the young as to imbue them with a clear ideal of marriage and its racial consequences. The present idea of patriotism will have to be extended; we must include in our "duty to our neighbour" and "our duty to our country"—our duty to posterity.

This will involve a change in the attitude of educationalists, both parents and teachers, towards the fundamental "facts of life" in relation to education.

Children should in the future grow up with a knowledge of the normal laws of life imparted in such a way that they may recognise their beauty and simplicity from the outset. The facts of sex and parenthood must be divested of their present unclean atmosphere and presented in their natural relationship to social development.

This will involve a practical alteration in the training of teachers; for until parents are themselves fitted to train their children the training must be done through the teachers with the consent and co-operation of the parents. The present system of leaving the adolescent uninstructed and unprotected from the dangers of the present social custom of a dual moral standard finding its expression in such an unhealthy form as prostitution, must be faced and dealt with.

It is insufficient to continue our present hypocritical attitude of giving lip service to one attitude and practical expression to another. We must recognise that unless early economic independence makes early marriage possible, extra-marital sex relations are certain to continue in a greater or less degree.

A generation or more must ensue before such a large change in moral outlook can give rise to the necessary social customs, but the principle of establishing responsibility for parenthood can be given due expression without delay.

We have before us a practical example of what can be done. In Norway a most admirable Bill became law in 1915 which protects the illegitimate child and makes both the father and mother responsible for its maintenance.

The law enacts that :

"Children whose parents have not entered into marriage with each other have the same legal position in regard to their father as to their mother."

"(1) That the illegitimate child shall have the right to take its father's name. The mother chooses which name it shall have, and when the child is grown up it can itself decide.

"(2) The child shall be brought up and educated according to the conditions of whichever of its parents is the most well-to-do.

"(3) The child shall inherit from its father and his relatives as if it were born in marriage."

Mr. Castberg, the Norwegian Minister of Justice, who introduced the Bill, says in the preamble :—

“Our legislation is still based on the outrageous and unnatural fiction that an illegitimate child has only a mother, that legally it has no father. This applies even if it is beyond any doubt who actually is the father. The law also in this case deprives the child of the right to have a father. Legislation has placed all the responsibility and the care for the child on the mother. The disproportion between the responsibility placed upon the man and the woman is the more outrageous as it is due to a legislation in which women have had no share—a legislation exclusively by males. It is not only a wrong done to the mother and the child, but a demoralising institution, as it frees the man from his natural responsibility, and thereby tempts him to recklessness in a relation which ought to be the most responsible and serious one in a man's life, to give life to a new being. It breaks down man's respect for woman, brutalises his view of the relation between parents, and between parents and children, and in this way repudiates what is the ethical basis of marriage.

“At the same time, this legalised irresponsibility of the man, his legally protected anonymity, exposes the child to want and disgrace, and contributes to the feeling of these children of being singled out and disowned, and causes so many of them to go down in the struggle for life.

“The laws intend to remove the injustice that society's disapproval of the illegitimate relation between the parents shall be visited on the child. They aim at establishing the paternity and increasing the feeling of responsibility of the father towards mother and child. They aim at crushing the system of concealment and lies in which paternity is now allowed to be shrouded, and which is in itself an offence to wifehood and to marriage. They enforce the duty of the man to take care of the woman who is with child by him. They are on the whole based on the fundamental principle that motherhood is to be protected and that a child can claim a child's right both from its father and its mother.”¹

We understand that although the Act has only been in operation eighteen months it is proving effective in that the objection hitherto raised in this country as to the difficulty of establishing paternity, and the danger of giving rise to a practice of blackmail has not been experienced, paternity in the vast majority of cases being uncontested and financial responsibility acknowledged. The usual defence that “there were others” is not accepted. The only defence is that the man has had no relations with the woman during the time in question. When several men have had such relations, the financial responsibility for the child is divided between them, and in such cases the child can only use the name of the

¹ *Jus Suffragii*, Aug. 1, 1916.

mother. The evil we want to eliminate as rapidly as possible is irresponsible parenthood.

Another reform to be carried into effect is the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, No. 26, which says :—

“Statutory recognition should be given to the principle that infectious venereal disease constitutes an incapacity for marriage. The process should be made available for all persons however poor.

“If under the existing law the effect of a decree of nullity is to render the children illegitimate, the new statutory enactment should provide that the disabilities attaching to such a condition should not follow.”

The necessity for maintaining the stability of the family need not be antagonistic to a certain latitude in divorce; in fact the stability of true marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood can surely best be safeguarded when sufficient freedom of action is secured to the partners in marriage. The present position, which only sanctions divorce and remarriage in the wealthy classes, leads directly to a decrease in the dignity and respect in which legal marriage is held in the social class where the need is equally great but the facilities are absent. The widespread recognition by the class concerned of an unjust condition produces a public opinion that condones conduct generated by such a position. Hence the leniency with which illegal unions are viewed in the poorer classes does *not* lead to stability in marriage. If early marriages are to be encouraged the corollary to that must be the possibility of rectifying certain inevitable mistakes.

A childless marriage is only of social value when it provides opportunities for those who contract it to live together sympathetically and economically. Even when the responsibility of parenthood has been incurred it may be better for obvious mistakes to be rectified provided that the interests of the children are safeguarded. The stability of marriage as an institution is less endangered by the divorce of those whose union is a failure, than by the forced continuance of intolerable marriages, which reduce the status and dignity of the institution and act as they do as a warning against matrimony to those who are economically independent and who in consequence are often unwilling to risk making an irretrievable mistake.

The development of a strong sense of family and racial responsibility will bring in its train a strong public opinion expressed in various social customs which will make for stability and increased care and selection in marriage, while the altered and higher moral standard will tend to reduce the risks of error. This principle, if agreed to, would give us the standard by which we might judge legislation now in contemplation. The Bill now before Parliament, formulated in order to allow those who have already separated to have their separation decrees confirmed as divorce after three, or preferably five years, can only be beneficial.

MATRIMONIAL CAUSES ACT, 1917.

1. This Act may be cited as the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1917.
2. From and after the passing of this Act all decrees for a judicial separation and all orders for a separation by any Court of summary jurisdiction shall, after a period of three years from the date thereof, have the same effect and force as a decree absolute for dissolution of marriage, *provided always* that either the husband or wife so separated shall make application to the Court which has made the decree or order in question, and satisfy the said Court that cohabitation has not been resumed during the said period of three years.
3. It shall also be lawful for any husband or wife to present a petition to the High Court of Justice praying that his or her marriage may be dissolved on the ground that they have been continuously separated for the said period of three years whether by mutual agreement or for any other reason.

We understand that approximately a quarter of a million people would be affected by this legislation.

There is no particular reason for the belief that unhappy marriages are on the average contracted by two unfit members of the community. On the contrary, in many cases the separation is due to definite defect, such as insanity or criminal tendencies on the part of one partner, and in such cases it is surely in every way beneficial to the community that the fit partner should have the option of re-marriage. Some people who oppose this view seem to be under the impression that divorce and re-marriage are compulsory! The change in legislation would only affect those who wished to secure their freedom and remarry.

Another problem bearing on the encouragement of early marriage is the need for encouraging parenthood. It has been

stated that this will be dependent on the early attainment of economic independence by the wage earner. It is also likely to be secured by the continuation of women in remunerative work after marriage.

The success obtained by women during the war in the various professional and industrial careers they have adopted is almost certain to lead to the continuation of the majority of these women in their professions.

Many people see an impossible conflict between the self-supporting and economically independent woman and motherhood, but for the next generation at least, until the destruction of the war has been paid for by increased production, it seems that our success in social reconstruction will depend on the extent to which we can maintain an increased productivity, and in view of the loss in war of man power this must be largely dependent on the possibility of retaining the commercial and industrial services of women. It will be necessary, therefore, to so safeguard their position as to make parenthood not only possible, but economically easy.

Many of those who oppose the continuance of women's work after the cessation of hostilities forget that the child-bearing period of a woman's life is not coterminous with her efficient working period.

It should be quite possible to retain the services of women before marriage, and though their work must be intermittent for the first few years after marriage, they can return to it regularly later as the cost of maintaining the family increases.

The problem is one, of course, which varies very much with the different social classes. In the industrial class in the majority of cases it will not be to the ultimate interest of the family for the mother to continue in industrial work after marriage, and if the family is recognised as the biological and economic unit social conditions will have to be so adjusted as to free her from the necessity of so doing.

In the matter of the more highly educated professional classes reforms will, it is hoped, be rapidly introduced that will lead to a reduction in the cost of education, but in any case the cost must be higher than it is in the industrial classes.

There will in all probability be a number of years during which the children of the professional classes will be dependent on their parents after they have ceased to need daily and regular maternal care. This will give renewed opportunity for the woman to return to professional life to her own satisfaction and the improvement of the economic position of the family.

It becomes clear, therefore, that the period of economic stress for every family will be the first ten years of family life, and our efforts at social reconstruction should be directed towards relieving the stress of that period. This has already been recognised, and slight progress made by the giving of the maternity benefit to the industrial classes through the medium of the Insurance Act.

In the professional classes, with the exception of a negligible exemption of £16 per child from income tax, everything on these lines still remains to be done. The cost of maternity and the cost of education are two of the main deterrents to parenthood.

The recent establishment of a maternity home for the wives of both professional men and officers, to meet what were thought to be special conditions due to the War, has revealed a pressing and a permanent need for this type of social co-operation.

The eugenic principle could find no better form of practical expression than in securing the provision of adequate homes and medical services for parents of fit stock on some scholarship system untainted by any idea of charity.

As the eugenic principle becomes more fully recognised, declarations of fitness for marriage will become the rule, and persons suffering from known hereditary defects and communicable disease will be legally and socially debarred from parenthood. This will render the allocation of maternity assistance very much easier in that all marriages would eventually reach the minimum level of eugenic fitness. That, however, is the ultimate ideal not to be reached for at least a generation, but immediate steps can be taken to increase the maternity assistance available in the industrial classes and to devise schemes of maternity assistance for the professional classes.

Housing.

One of the biggest practical problems of reconstruction that has to be faced is housing. That apparently may be divided into two sections. Since the outbreak of War constructive building, except for Government purposes, has to all intents and purposes ceased, therefore the regular replacement of houses falling into disuse each year and the provision for the normal increase of population has stopped, and had already been neglected for some years previously. This, it is understood, means an actual deficiency, even under old standards of housing, of 300,000 new houses up to the 1st of January, 1917; but the mere replacement of the house wastage of the last three years will by no means meet the views of those who know the effect that the present condition of housing is having on the health, both moral and physical, of the workers of the country. The difficulty of making good the deficiency is increased owing to the economic position. It is anticipated that after the War by far the greatest return for capital will be derived from productive industry and that the cost of building will raise the economic rent far above any figure that can be paid by the worker out of his normal wages. As the demand for capital in industry will probably more than equal the supply of available private capital, it seems obvious that the housing need of the country will have to be met in part by the proceeds of taxation or some form of State guarantee.

The housing of the population will have to be recognised as one of the fundamental requirements with which the State must provide its citizens.

This brings us to what may give us the guiding principle in this difficult question. We have recognised that the birth of a citizen into the community does entail certain responsibilities on that community. If it has any claims to civilisation no individual may starve, and we have set a minimum standard allowed in cases of ultimate necessity by the State as far as food and maintenance are concerned. If this principle were extended to housing it would do something to clear our conception as to the relationship between housing accommodation for the individual and the collective responsibility of the

community. If it is to the interests of the community as a whole to select as many as possible of its efficient individuals and establish them in a position that will enable them to assume the responsibility of parenthood and to prevent certain groups, by falling to a very low standard of life, from contaminating the rest of the population both by disease and vicious customs, then, in addition to setting a minimum standard of food and maintenance, a minimum standard of housing accommodation must also be recognised. The financial liabilities of a reconstructive policy with regard to housing will in all probability be borne partly by local authorities, partly by private enterprise and partly by the Imperial Government. Would it not be possible to require from the local authorities in each area the provision of a minimum standard of housing accommodation to meet the needs of the population resident within the area under their jurisdiction?

This would mean that a certain amount of housing accommodation would have to be erected at the expense of the town and made available for those of its citizens who by accident or inefficiency were unable to earn a wage enabling them to secure adequate house room. The fact that the community undertook to provide this accommodation would give them some claim to limit the freedom of action of the residents, in certain directions. In certain cases these individuals would be biologically unfit. It would be those who were not up to the mental and physical standard of their industrial group and who were therefore unable to earn sufficient for their independent maintenance who would form one group to be dealt with. Their inability, if due to inherent defect, should be recognised as a barrier to marriage and parenthood, and suitable steps taken to discourage both. On the other hand, there will be certain families who are deprived by war or industrial accident of the full earning capacity of their bread-winner but who may not be biologically unfit. These points should be taken into consideration by the local authorities allocating the accommodation.

Once a minimum standard of housing has been recognised it will immediately become the aim of all who are efficient to

secure house accommodation at a higher level than the minimum standard, and the problem to be met by the reconstruction authorities will be to provide housing accommodation at an economic rent giving sufficient latitude for suitable sized families on the part of those who can establish their economic independence. This point does need emphasising in order that it may obtain due consideration on the part of local authorities, as is evidenced by previous efforts at raising the standard of housing for working men and artisans.

The erection of good quality tenements and houses let under conditions which select the best members of the industrial community has had a distinctly beneficial effect in raising the standard of living in these groups, but it is now tending to have a distinctly anti-eugenic effect in that in the majority of cases these tenements and industrial dwellings impose conditions on their tenants which are designed to prevent overcrowding but in effect preclude these selected fit couples from becoming parents of more than two children and at the same time retaining the advantages of the better housing accommodation.

A practical instance may be quoted :—

The wife of a sergeant-major, who was a skilled artisan before the War, is resident in one of these flats and is the healthy and capable mother of two children. Both parents are essentially fit citizens. The mother regretted that she could not increase her family as if she did so it would necessitate her leaving their flat and the neighbourhood, as it was impossible for her to secure additional accommodation or to remain in her present accommodation if they increased their family.

This example gives a clear understanding of the eugenic bearing of questions dealing with a housing policy and indicates how essential it is that both Imperial and local reconstruction authorities should be imbued with the principles of eugenics, so that they may consider in what way their policy will re-act on the individual families concerned, and bear in mind that the success of any reconstruction scheme must ultimately depend on the extent to which it will encourage fit parenthood and an increase in the proportion of healthy and fit citizens of the future.

National Health.

The proposal to co-ordinate the health activities of the various Government Departments should, if it results in the foundation of a Ministry of Public Health be a strong factor in giving effect to eugenic principles. On the one hand the existence of a central authority working in close touch with the Census Office will be in an unrivalled position to obtain accurate and detailed information on many burning scientific problems, information which will enable us to make a more detailed and effective application of the general principles of heredity and selection in the future. In order that the information so secured should be made to yield the highest possible return of knowledge bearing on racial questions, it is essential that a Eugenics Research Committee should be an integral part of the Public Health Ministry, or, better still, not a section of the Ministry of Health but a section of the Imperial Research Department, which, it is hoped, will shortly be formed; both Departments should obtain and retain the services of the best scientists in all fields at the Universities throughout the Empire and devise those lines of research that are most likely to give adequate answers to the unsolved problems. The eugenic section would be an essential element in the department of which it formed part, would rank as other sections in the department, and have at its disposal the material available in any other Government department likely to throw light upon its enquiries, and would itself be available to other Government departments for the solution of any eugenic problem disclosed in the course of practical administration. We have done extraordinarily little so far to acquire detailed information as to the inheritance of anti-social traits. In America already "field workers" are attached to almost all public institutions for the insane and mentally defective with a view to ascertaining to what extent the individuals under State care are victims of defects hereditarily transmitted, and to what extent these defects are due to preventible causes. Such work and enquiry into the family heredity is of urgent importance in this country, and it is essential that it should be undertaken by specially trained individuals, that the

results should be referred to impartial scientists and not used as evidence in support of political and social theories to which the investigators have already publicly committed themselves. Too much of the work hitherto published on eugenics shows traces of this weakness, and if real progress is to be made the purely scientific aspect of the question needs to be kept very distinct from the practical application of the principles to social reform.

In addition to the inheritance of mental characters further evidence is urgently needed—as to the effect of the industrial employment of pregnant women—of venereal disease on offspring through the first and second generation—of conduct in marriage during pregnancy—of birth intervals on infantile mortality—of the biological factor in infantile mortality—of migration on fertility—of interbreeding between the various human races, and many other problems of practical import to racial well-being.

The Ministry of Health might, by rousing the public conscience on all matters pertaining to health, make practical the custom of health declarations before marriage. The recent action of the State of New York may be cited as an example of an educative measure of this kind. Within the State it is now necessary for all couples applying for a marriage licence to sign a form of declaration to the effect that they have never had, or if they have ever had, have been pronounced free from venereal disease. Considerable penalties attach to perjury, and although it is not anticipated that many prosecutions are likely to take place under this Act the educational value of such a step is likely to be considerable. The direction of education towards the principle of parental responsibility will inevitably bring these various questions into prominence, and if the question of offspring looms largely in the consideration of marriage, then of necessity the capacity of the individuals contemplating marriage to be the parents of healthy offspring will receive attention from these individuals themselves and their parents and guardians. This will give rise to social customs calculated to safeguard the interests of posterity.

The dissemination of information on general problems of public health will inevitably bring in its train a dissemination of more detailed knowledge of personal hygiene which must in the future include the hygiene of marriage. Such knowledge is an urgent need among all classes, but especially among working men and women, who hitherto have been given no opportunity of acquiring it. It is made easily accessible to the economically independent, but is hedged round with many difficulties for those to whom it is essential both for their individual well-being and for the well-being of the community.

If early marriage and an increased sense of parental responsibility are to be encouraged, and it is established on many grounds that the way to national health is through this door, then it must be recognised that responsible parenthood also involves individual decision as to the number of children to be called into being and the life period in the parents at which those children should be born. Responsible parenthood, therefore, must mean the recognition of the principle of birth control. The principle of birth control is conceded by all, even those belonging to schools of religious thought that are opposed to the principle of artificial methods of obtaining this control. The only difference of opinion which exists is the method by which the principle of responsibility should be expressed, and it seems that, like many other matters of opinion, this to-day must also be left to the individual conscience. The important matter to the State is that its citizens should recognise their individual racial responsibility; the method taken by each individual to give effect to that ideal must be a matter for the individual conscience. This is already recognised and practised by the educated and economically independent class, but owing to ignorance and prejudice barriers have been raised against the public discussion of these problems in a form available for the poorer people.

It is to be hoped that the dissemination of information on all matters pertaining to healthy parenthood will necessarily involve the dissemination of cleanly knowledge on these matters.

Together with an increase of knowledge on the methods of birth control must go a wide dissemination of eugenic

teaching, that all fit persons must recognise it as their paramount duty in life to serve the race and pass on their heritage of fitness to the next generation under the best possible marriage conditions.

As a summary, then, we may conclude that a practical policy on the following lines could be formulated :—

Education.

From the Imperial Standpoint:—To secure that teachers, through our elementary and secondary educational system should be themselves thoroughly conversant with the science of eugenics, and that curricula suitable to the ages of the children and adolescents who come under their instruction should be prepared.

From the Local Standpoint:—That eugenists should wherever possible, serve on local governing bodies, on local education committees, as school governors, etc., and so influence the public opinion of their own district to support the policy of instructing the young in the “facts of life” and in imbuing the adolescent with a strong ideal of racial responsibility. Special instruction should be given to adolescents on matters of general and sex hygiene. Social organisations should be encouraged to increase the present provisions for recreation, especially, for organised games arranged for the youth of both sexes between the school and the marriage age; it is only by providing adequate counter-attractions that one can expect to turn the mind of the adolescent from the unhealthy channels into which it is driven by our present social customs. During this period also the facts of heredity in as far as they are known should be fully disseminated.

Marriage and Divorce.

From the Imperial Standpoint:—The earliest possible opportunity should be given to the passage of the present Divorce Law Reform Bill now before the House.

Eugenists should advocate that the recommendations with regard to marriage by the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases should be carried into effect and that due consideration should be given as to the best method of giving practical expression to other urgently needed reforms. They can

advocate the passing of an Act dealing with the question of the illegitimate child on the same lines as those adopted in Norway.

They should also advocate as soon as possible health declarations before marriage, anticipating for the present only an educational value from the move, but later endeavouring to secure its actual enforcement.

From the Local Standpoint:—To bring home to those engaged in Local Government and general administration the social and economic harm done by the present situation and to endeavour to form a sound public opinion in support of this policy.

Housing, Etc.

From the Imperial Standpoint:—An economic policy with regard to housing should be adopted, which while setting a minimum standard of housing to which local authorities should be expected to conform, would give latitude to the efficient citizens in the community, to secure house accommodation at an economic rent, better than the minimum standard.

From a Local Standpoint:—Eugenists should participate actively in local government and should bring prominently before the Housing Committees of the Borough, Urban and Rural District Councils the social and economic importance of securing citizens of good stock for the future. That all schemes with regard to municipal housing should be framed from the point of view of selecting fit citizens as parents.

That Municipal Authorities should give preference in employment to married employes of good character, and that the present iniquitous practice of discharging Poor Law and other public servants on marriage or if married, considering children as a barrier to continuance in office, should be combated.

Eugenists should also advocate that the Mental Deficiency Act should be administered vigorously and wisely.

The Re-absorption of the Fighting Forces into Civilian Life.

From the Imperial Standpoint:—Eugenists should advocate a very careful consideration of the following principle with regard to the problem of emigration.

In view of the fact that in an agricultural life the birth rate tends to be higher than in an industrial community preference should be given to the best stocks, and to married men, in allocating such grants of land in the Dominions and Crown Colonies as will be available for members of the fighting forces after the War.

It should be considered whether special protection cannot be given to men discharged through wounds, in order that their independent economic position may be established and safeguarded so that they may be able to assume the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood.

One point which might receive consideration from the Ministry of Pensions is with reference to the grant that is made to men married before or during the War in proportion to the number of children born before disablement is received. Could not this principle be wisely extended to include a grant on the same scale for those children that may subsequently be born, and that disabled men marrying after discharge from the Army should also be eligible for similar grants, provided they have married women of good character?

From the Local Standpoint:—Members of statutory Committees should make themselves fully conversant with the principles of eugenics, that they may be guided in the details of administration by these principles, and that in addition to the dissemination of the facts enumerated above they may in as far as possible encourage voluntary organisations to give facilities for social intercourse between suitable men and women, so that the returned disabled soldier or sailor may be protected from unsuitable mating and encouraged to exercise a wise selection in marriage.

Public Health.

From the Imperial Standpoint:—Eugenists should advocate the establishment of a Ministry of Health as soon as possible, and that in connection with it a responsible Research Department with a strong eugenic section should be established; that the Ministry of Health should be required to disseminate the necessary information on questions of public health, especially those of infant welfare, preventible disease,

and matters affecting marriage and parenthood, in a form suitable for general circulation.

With Regard to Local Authorities:—Members of Health Committees should make themselves fully conversant with the facts of heredity in as far as they are known, together with the principles of eugenics, and should adopt a eugenic policy with regard to infant welfare, the education in race hygiene, especially of the adolescent, and should generate an added sense of parental responsibility. While encouraging infant care they should also disseminate information as to the value of adequate birth intervals and of the dangers of venereal disease, and emphasise the eugenic duties of the family, that is to say, that fit persons should be encouraged to have as large families as they can adequately maintain, and unfit parents should be discouraged from being responsible for the creation of defective individuals.

It is one of the urgent needs of the immediate future that thinking men and women should participate actively in local government, and eugenicists should urge all who are considering the problems of reconstruction not to neglect their duties as citizens, but to participate as members of the various committees and local governing bodies in the administrative work of their own districts and so aid in rebuilding our social structure on better lines.